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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3330
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5568
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3287
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3152
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 001057

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, INL/AAE BUHLER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: WILL "ADALAT" CONTINUE
PUBLISHING DRUG CRIME REPORTS?

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (U) On July 31, Ashgabat weekly "Adalat" (Justice) newspaper published an article by Jumamyrat Achylov, Judge of Azatlyk Etrap (district) Court, reporting that two Ashgabat residents, Meylis Durdyev and Nurberdi Bayramov, both of whom had previously been convicted and later pardoned for drug-related crimes, were again detained for illegal purchase, possession, and sale of illicit narcotics the officers of State Counter-Narcotics Service (SCNS). The article stated that Durdyev and Bayramov were sentenced to 10 and 11 years in prison, respectively.

13. (U) Similarly, in "Adalat" on August 14, Judge of Niyazov District Court Dowlet Burinov reported that Ashgabat resident, Gurbandurdy Amanov, allegedly purchased one gram of heroin from an unidentified subject at Choganly "Tolkuchka" Bazaar for the purpose of resale. Burinov was sentenced for 11 years in prison. He had also been previously convicted for drug charges and then released under a general presidential pardon.

14. (U) Another drug-related crime story was reported in the same edition of "Adalat" by Aknur Amanmuhammedova, Prosecutor's assistant from Ahal Province. According to the report, Ashyrmurat Kuliyeu, a 45 year-old farmer from Serahs (a town on the border with Iran) allegedly purchased cannabis seed from an unidentified person on March 2008 at a bazaar in Tejen and planted it in his garden. In the fall, Kuliyeu produced 153 grams of marijuana from the grown cannabis plant and offered it to his acquaintance, Yazmyrat Movlamov. Movlamov purchased marijuana from Kuliyeu on February 18 for the

equivalent of 100 USD, but was detained by the SCNS officers when he attempted to re-sell it. Kuliyeu and Movlamov were sentenced for 11 and 10 years in prison respectively.

15. (U) COMMENT: On July 29, during the State Security Council's meeting, the Minister of Defense (MOD), Yaylym Berdiyev, criticized the editorial staff of Adalat for failing to fulfill "its designated tasks." Following the MOD's criticism, President Berdimuhamedov fired Adalat's Chief Editor and appointed Suvhanmyrat Baymyradov to this position. Adalat is the only official source regularly reporting on drug-related crimes. It remains to be seen whether the new Chief Editor will find drug crime stories too sensitive for publication or, on the contrary, will improve the quality of the reports in the country's leading law enforcement newspaper. Regardless of future reporting trends, it is clear from the above accounts that recidivism among convicted drug dealers is a serious problem. Perhaps the Niyazov-era lenient policy of presidential pardons encouraged potential drug dealers, who even if caught and convicted, nonetheless expected a short term behind bars. Pardons for drug convictions are no longer allowed under Berdimuhamedov. END COMMENT.

MILES